

Common Access Card (CAC)

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Summary

A Common Access Card (CAC) is a DoD smart card used as the standard identification for Active Duty military personnel, reserve component personnel, authorized State employees of the National Guard, DoD civilian employees, and eligible DoD contractor personnel. A CAC is used to enable access to DoD computers, networks, and certain DoD facilities. In some locations, a CAC may be used to gain building access. A CAC is the size of a credit card. An individual's information must be entered or uploaded in Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to enable Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) to issue a CAC.

A CAC has the ability to store up to 144KB of data storage and memory on a single integrated circuit chip which allows for rapid authentication and enhanced security for physical and logical access. The data stored on a CAC can only be accessed through secure CAC applications.

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Quick Guide: Receiving or renewing a CAC

1. Meet all DEERS requirements
 - a. All eligible personnel must be entered into DEERS and undergo proper identity vetting
 - b. A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint check must be completed and approved
 - c. A National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI) background security check must be initiated prior to issuing a CAC
2. Meet all RAPIDS requirements
 - a. Reference Form I-90 to provide two forms of identification
 - b. Applicant creates a six to eight digit number to be used as a Personal Identification Number (PIN)
3. Visit any of the 1500+ RAPIDS centers worldwide to obtain a CAC
 - a. Access the [RAPIDS Site Locator](#) to find the nearest RAPIDS center

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What makes a CAC different?

A. The following are reasons a CAC is smarter, safer, and stronger:

- More sophisticated
 - Data storage and memory capacity
 - Integrated circuit chips, magnetic stripe, bar codes, and contactless capability
 - DoD's solution to the new Federal credential
 - Allows the identities of government employees and contractors to be verified electronically quickly, while resisting any fraud, tampering or counterfeiting
- Safer than ever
 - Bring us closer into compliance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 12 and Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 201-1
 - Used for identification purposes when entering Federal buildings and controlled spaces
 - Improved vetting and background check requirements
 - Meets or exceeds requirements for all applicable Privacy Laws
 - Electronic authentication to gain physical and logical access improves security
- Used with complete confidence
 - Log on securely to DoD networks, systems, and websites
 - Access Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)-compliant systems
 - Encrypt and electronically sign emails and documents

Q. Will benefits and privileges change for individuals receiving a CAC?

A. No, benefits and privileges are the same as before.

Q. Who can receive a CAC?

A. The following are eligible to receive a CAC:

- Active Duty military personnel
- Reserve component personnel
- Authorized State employees for the National Guard
- DoD Civilian employees
- Eligible DoD contractor personnel

Q. What is a CAC used for?

A. A CAC is an identity credential that can be used to facilitate physical and logical access to DoD facilities or computers. While the capability to provide both physical and logical access is built into the card, this does not provide access to all card holders. Access control will continue to be the responsibility of the local commands/Agencies.

Q. I have lost my CAC, what should I do?

- A. Report the missing CAC immediately to your supervisor or Information Management Officer (IMO).

Q. What if a cardholder forgets their PIN?

- A. The cardholder has three chances to enter their PIN correctly. After the third time, the system will lock the cardholder out and the cardholder needs to return to the CAC issuance station or a Service CAC Pin Reset workstation to have the card unlocked.

Q. Where can I find a RAPIDS location?

- A. Access the [RAPIDS Site Locator](#) to find the nearest RAPIDS center.

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Links

- [DoD Common Access Card](#)
This website provides information on the next-generation common access card (CAC), how to obtain a CAC, and supporting policies & resources.
- [RAPIDS Site Locator](#)
This website provides CAC issuing sites CONUS and OCONUS and it searchable by city, State, zip code, site name, country, or CAC.
- [U.S. Army Human Resources Command – Common Access Card \(CAC\) Support Office](#)
This website provides a definition of a CAC, a definition of DEERS/RAPIDS, frequently asked questions, CAC points of contact information, and useful links.

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References

Regulations

- [AFI 36-3026 IP, Identification Cards for Members of the Uniformed Services, Their Eligible Family Members, and Other Eligible Personnel](#)
- [Department of Defense \(DoD\) Implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directive – \(HSPD-12\)](#)
- [DoDD 5200.2-R, Personnel Security Program](#)
- [DoDI 1000.13, Identification \(ID\) Cards for Members of the Uniformed Services, Their Dependents, and Other Eligible Individuals](#)

Documents and Forms

- [DD Form 1172-2, Application for Department of Defense Common Access Card – DEERS Enrollment](#)

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Points of Contact

- [DoD Common Access Card Website](#)
- Personnel Division (ARNG-HRP)
111 South George Mason Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

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